

Message Text

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73

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-13

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R 041816Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3661

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMATA

AMEMASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEOUCIGALPA

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 3361

E.O. 11652 - GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ES, HO

SUBJECT: HONDURAS/SALVADOR: MOLINA REPORTS ON SUMMIT

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

1. PRESIENT MOLINA APPEARED ON TELEVISION EVENING OF

SEPTEMBER 3 TO REPORT ON HIS SEPTEMBER 1 MEETING WITH
GENERAL TOPEZ ARELLANO IN GUATEMALA. THE SPEECH, OBVIOUSLY
DESIGNED TO SET A GOOD ATMOSPHERE FOR THE FORTHCOMING
NEGOTIATIONS, STRESSED THE CORDIALITY OF THE INFORMAL
DISCUSSIONS WITH LOPEZ, AND LISTED THE POSITIVE STEPS
ALREADY TAKEN BY BOTH COUNTRIES TO PROMOTE PEACE SUCH AS
THE RECENT MEETINGS BETWEEN VARIOUS MINISTERS, PRIVATE
GROUPS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL OF BOTH COUNTRIES, THE
OPENING OF SALVADORAN BORDERS TO HONDURAN TRAVELERS
ETC. PERHAPS IN AN EFFORT TO SOOTH GUATEMALA'S RUFFLED
FEATHERS ABOUT THE SELECTION OF MEXICO AS THE SITE
FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS, MOLINA EXPLAINED CAREFULLY THAT MEXICO
WAS CHOSEN SINCE IT HAS BEEN REPRESENTING THE DIPLOMATIC
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INTERESTS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES SINCE THE 1969 CONFLICT.

2. CONCERNING THE NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES, THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT AFTER A "CORDIAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS" WITH HIS HONDURAN COLLEAGUE, THERE WAS AGREEMENT THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT TO THE DISPUTE IS BRIGHT WITH THE UNDERSTANDING, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WOULD BE CONDUCTED "ON THE BASIS OF A MUTUAL RESPECT FOR THE CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITS WHICH GOVERN US". HE ALSO TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO REMIND THE LOCAL MEDIA THAT THEY BORE A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THEIR ROLE AS PUBLIC OPINION SHAPERS DURING THESE NEGOTIATIONS. MOLINA CONCLUDED WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT SALVADORAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UN DR. GALINDO POHL WILL JOIN FOREIGN MINISTER BORGONOVO ON THE NEGOTIATING TEAM. HE ALSO ASSURED THE PUBLIC THAT "AS A SALVADORAN AND SOLDIER" HE WILL SEE THAT THE NATIONAL INTERESTS ARE PROTECTED.

3. COMMENT: THE SPEECH CONTAINED LITTLE IN THE WAY OF SURPRISES BUT WAS SKILLFULLY CONSTRUCTED TO PUT THE BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT ON THE MEXICO TALKS. HE ASSURED THE PUBLIC AND THE MILITARY THAT SALVADOR'S INTERESTS, ESPECIALLY ON THE BORDER SETTLEMENT ISSUE, WILL NOT BE COMPROMISED -- THUS THE REFERENCE TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITS, THE "IRREDUCIBLE TERRITORY" PROVISIO) AND THE NOMINATION OF DR. GALINDO POHL AS NEGOTIATOR SINCE THE LATTER IS HELD IN HIGH REGARD IN BOTH POLITICAL AND MILITARY CIRCLES. THE REFERENCE TO THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MEDIA CONSTITUTED A SUBTLE WARNING THAT ANTI-HONDURAN COMMENTARY, WHICH DOES SURFACE FROM TIME TO TIME IN SOME OF THE NEWSPAPERS, WILL NOT BE LOOKED UPON FAVORABLY WHILE THE TALKS ARE IN PROGRESS. OBVIOUSLY, HOWEVER, THE SPEECH DID NOT REALLY GRAPPLE WITH THE KEY ISSUE OF THE BORDER DEMARCATION (SEE SAN SALVADOR 3317) AND UNLESS MOTINA AND LOPEZ WERE ABLE TO WORK OUT SOME FORMULA FOR SETTLING THIS THORNY PROBLEM AT THE GUATEMALA MEETING, WE, ALONG WITH MANY SALVADORANS, REMAIN SOMEWHAT SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR THE FORTHCOMING TALKS.

MOSKOWITZ

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